THE MINISTERS OF ENGLAND

Which are called, the

Miniſters of the Goſpel,

VVeighed in the Ballance of Equity:

By way of Conſideration, whereby it plainly appears, whether they be the Miniſters of Chriſt, or of Antichriſt.

And alſo, Whether to bear a Teſtimony againſt a ſetled Maintenanee, either by Tyths or any other way which may be invented to uphold that Miniſtry, be any way dangerous to deſtroy the Goſpel of Chriſt; *Reſolved.*

With a Serious Meditation upon the dealings of God with *England*, and the State thereof in general.

Who is wiſe, and he ſhall underſtand theſe things? prudent, and he ſhall know them: for the wayes of the Lord are right, and the juſt ſhall walk in them, but tranſgreſſors ſhall fall therein, Hoſ. 14. 9.

Publiſhed for the ſatisfactiou of ſuch as deſire to prove all things, and are willing to hold that faſt which is good; By a Friend unto the faithful Miniſters of the Goſpel of Chriſt, *John Braithwait.*

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DOMINUS
ILLUMINATIO
MEA

THE MINISTERS OF ENGLAND

VVhich are called *Miniſters* of the *Goſpel*, weighed in the ballance of Equity.

VVHen I began to conſider of theſe things, and weighed them in the ballance of Equity and Truth; my ſoul within me was troubled, to hear the cry amongſt the People concerning the *Miniſters*, and the *Goſpel*; ſome crying this is a *Miniſter* of the *Goſpel*, another that; and while I was meditating on theſe things, the Lord God, that made Heaven and Earth, by his Spirit ſaid unto me, Weigh them in my ballance of Equity, compare them with my Servants and *Miniſters* in former ages, and ſee whether they be in their *Call*, *Practiſe*, and *Doctrine*, agreeable to my Servants; which if they be not, let the People underſtand and know thereof, that ſo many as deſires after the way of life, and ſalvation, may be deceived no longer, and the reſt may be left without excuſe.

Then I began to conſider how the Miniſters and Servants of the Lord, were ſent forth in former ages, whether they were ſent to the *Schools* to learn, that they might be fitted to do the Lords work, or be his *Miniſters*; and I could not find in all the *Amos* 3.11.

Scriptures of Truth, that the *Miniſters* of *Chriſt* were ſent to the *Schools* of *Learning*, with an intention thereby to be made *Mi-*
Mark 1.16 17. *niſters* of the *Goſpel*, but they were called forth from their labours and imployments, and were endued with power from on high, by him that ſent them, to perform the ſervice they went about.

But they who are commonly called the *Miniſters* of the *Goſpel* in *England*, are ſent to the *Schools* to learn the *Tongues*, and *Languages*, and that they ſay fits them to be *Miniſters* of *Chriſt*;
Gen. 11. 7, 8, 9. which many *Tongues* and *Languages* came in ſince tranſgreſſion, and the juſtice of God was executed upon them, who thought to make themſelves a Name, and build a Tower whoſe top might reach unto heaven; and now thoſe men called *Miniſters*, glory in their *Tongues* and *Languages*. Do they not glory when they ſay he is an able *Miniſter*, he hath the *Tongues*? here the *Tongues* makes them able, (as they ſay) here they take the glory from
Rev. 5. 9. *Chriſt*, and aſcribes it to the *Tongues*, which *Tongues Chriſt* redeems out of, and ſo they glory in that which *Chriſt* redeems out of, which glory the *Lord God* of Heaven and Earth will ſtain, and ſhame and confuſion ſhall come upon them.

Object. *But ſayes the People, they may be* Miniſters *of Chriſt, though they learn the Tongues; was not* Paul *a Miniſter of Chriſt, and was not he brought up at the feet of* Gamaliel? *and had not the Apoſtles the gift of Tongues?*

Anſw. Yea, *Paul* was a *Miniſter* of *Chriſt*, but the bringing
Acts 22. 3, to the 22. up at the feet of *Gamaliel*, did not make him a *Miniſter* of *Chriſt* is apparent, for after that he perſecuted the *Church of God*, until ſuch time as the Lord met with him, and called him by his grace, to be a *Miniſter* and a *Witneſs* for his Name. Then if it be the Lords work, to call and make *Miniſters*, then thoſe men who believe or think, that *Tongues* or *Languages* can make *Miniſters* of *Chriſt*, are in an error, and are ignorant of the *power* of *God*, and aſcribe that to the *Tongues* and *Languages* (which at the beſt are but a gift) which is only due to God; though we do not forbid to ſpeak with *Tongues*.

Object. *But then they ſay, you miſtake us, we do not aſcribe the glory to the Tongues, we uſe them but as a means.*

Anſ. But if you uſe that as a means, after ſuch a manner as God never-

never ordained (to wit) that none without it can be made *Ministers* of *Christ*, then you ascribe that to the means which properly belongs to God: and so would limit the holy one of *Israel* to your means, and helps, your *tongues* and *languages*, that so none might be called *Ministers* of *Christ*, but such as you approve of, who at the least will give some honour to your *tongues* and *languages*; which makes the people idolize you, and wonder after you, but now you are weighed & found too light, your glory will the Lord God of Heaven and Earth lay in the dust, and he will call forth *Servants* and *Ministers* by his *Spirit*, as in former ages, whom he will endue with his power from on high, that will glorifie him for ever.

Which tongues the Beast had power over, Rev. 13.17.

But further, when I began to consider the life and practise of those men, whether it might not be agreeable to the life and practice of the *Ministers* of *Christ*; and when I had considered the life of the *Prophets* of the *Lord*, and *Ministers* of *Christ*, they were *holy* men, and *meek* men, *just* and *sober*, and were not to be called of men *Master*, nor have the chiefest *place* in the *Assemblies*, nor *stand praying* in the *Synagogues*; *for* the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* did so, which was against *Christ*, which *Christ* cryed woe against; and when I had diligently considered this matter, I found them (to wit) those pretended *Ministers* of the *Gospel*, in the steps and practise of the *false Prophets*, *preaching* for *hire*, and *divining* for *money*, and more unjust than ever I read that the *false Prophets* were in former ages, in hailing men to prison, and spoiling their goods, and in the steps of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* which is afore mentioned; and when I saw them so clean contrary in their *call*, *life*, and *practise*, to the holy men of *God*, my heart began to pitty the people, whereupon it came presently into my mind. But nevertheless though it be thus with them in *life* and *practise*, for all this may not their Doctrine be good? and then I began to consider their *Doctrine* and compare some few of them with the *Doctrine of Christ* and his *Apostles*; *Christ* said, *be ye perfect as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect*; and the *Apostle* said, *we preach wisdome among them that are perfect*; mark that, (are perfect) was not that in this life? but do not these learned men say that none can be perfect in this life? the *Apostle* said, *the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death*:

Tit. 1.7,8. Mat. 10. Mark. 12. 38,39,40.

Mich. 3.11.

Mat 5.48. Cor. 2,6.

Rom 8.2.

hath

Hath made me free, mark that, was not that in this life, or while the Apoſtle was in the body? but do not they ſay, none can be made free from ſin in this life? John ſaid, *that was the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the World*; was not Chriſt that true light? who ſaid, *I am come a light into the World, that whoſoever followeth me ſhould not abide in darkneſs, but ſhould have the light of life*; but do not they ſay that every man is not lighted, except it be with a *natural* & a *created light*; the *Apoſtle* ſaid, *the grace of God that brings ſalvation hath appeared to all men*; but is not their Doctrine, that it hath appeared but to ſome men?

John 1.9: & 8:12: Tit:2:11:

And when I began to weigh theſe *Doctrines* of theirs, in the *equal ballance*, I found them very unſound and contrary to the *Scriptures*, and then came into my mind that ſaying of *Chriſt*, *By their fruits ye ſhall know them*, or, *every tree is known by its fruits*; *men do not gather grapes of thornes, nor figgs of thiſtles*; and when I had thus conſidered the ſtate of the *tollerated Miniſters*, or *pretended Miniſters of the Goſpel in England*, and found them clear contrary to *Chriſt* & his *Apoſtles*, in theſe and many more things which I might mention, then I ſaw it was the Lords righteous judgments upon them to ſtrip them naked and bare, and ſtain their glory; for as much as they have ſought honour to themſelves, and have diſhonoured the Lord God of Heaven and Earth, who is now riſen in his power, which they have denyed, and in effect they have ſaid, his arme is ſhortned that it cannot ſave (as in former ages) and revelations is ceaſed, and is to be expected no more, and ſo the day hath been dark over them, and there hath been no viſion, *and where there is no viſion the people periſh*: and for this cauſe will the Lord God let them know the revelation of his righteous judgments, which ſhall ſhortly come upon them, though they would put it far away, and though *they cry peace, peace, yet ſhall ſudden deſtruction come*, both upon them, & all that willingly doe uphold them.

Matt 7:16: Prov: 29: 18:

And then I began to conſider upon the *ſetled* or rather *forced maintenance*, which as it appears doth uphold them, whether to bear a *teſtimony* againſt it, be any way dangerous to deſtroy the *Goſpel of Chriſt* yea or nay? and when I had conſidered well upon this matter, I could not ſee nor find, that *Chriſt* had laid a ſettled, or forced *maintenance* for the foundation of the *Goſpel*; but

but did ſend forth his *Miniſters freely*; *Freely they had received, freely they were to give*; *and he that preacheth the Goſpel may live of the Goſpel*; here the *Goſpel* was to *maintain* them, and not a forced *maintainance* to *maintain* it; *for the Goſpel is the power of God to Salvation*, ſaith the Apoſtle; whoſe care was not to make the *Goſpel chargeable*; but as it doth appear thoſe men which are called *Miniſters* of the *Goſpel* now in *England*, ſtrive to make that which they call *Goſpel* chargeable, and that not only to them, who receive their doctrine; but alſo to them who *deny it*; which is a moſt unrighteous thing; what can be more unrighteous than that one *Congregation*, or *Aſſembly* of people, ſhould be forced by a law to *maintain* the *Miniſter* and *meeting place* of another *Church*, or *Aſſembly*, which are clean contrary the *one* to the *other* in their *Judgement*, in things appertaining to the *worſhip* of *God*? and if it may be unrighteouſneſs in the *one*, is it not ſo in the *other*? Seeing they both beleive, or at leaſt they ſay, the way which they walk in, is the *way of God*. Mat. 10.8. 1 Cor. 9. 14. 18.

Object. *But if it could be certainly judged which of them is in the right way, might not they that are in the right way, compel and force them that are not, to maintain them?*

Anſw. Nay, he that is in the *right way*, muſt *do as he would be done unto*, and that is *juſt* and *right*, and that is the *royall law*, the *Law of Chriſt*; now if thou wouldeſt not willingly *maintain* the *Miniſter* of an *aſſembly* that differeth from thee in judgment, then thou muſt not deſire, much leſs force a *mantenance* from them; but if thou keep *a flock*, *eat the milk of the flock*, if thou plant a Vinyard, *eat the fruit thereof*; mark, *he that plants a vinyard*, *may eat of the fruit thereof*; he doth not ſay, *thou may eat of that thou haſt not planted*; for how could that *convince* men, or *convert* them unto *God*. To eat them, and to devour them, would rather ſet mens hearts againſt thee, and that way which thou doſt profeſſe: and therefore as in this reſpect to bear a *Teſtimony* againſt *Tythes*, or any other *forced maintenance*, to *maintain Miniſters*, is no way *dangerous to deſtroy the Goſpel of Chriſt*. Jam. 2. 8. 1 Cor. 9. 7

Object. *But if there be not a law to compel men to pay to the Miniſters, People are ſo hard hearted and Covetous, they will not pay toward their maintenance; and then preaching will go down, and people will become heathens.*

Anſw.

Anſw. It ſeems then, that for all the *Preaching* that hath been in *England*, people are yet *hard hearted*, and *Covetous*; what reaſon is there then, that thoſe that are yet hard hearted, & covetous, ſhould pay or maintain thoſe men, that they have not profited by; when I conſider this thing, it appeareth to me, to be greater *covetouſneſs* in thoſe men called *Miniſters*, to deſire to have a *maintenance* from thoſe people, that have *not profited by them*; than it is for the other *to detain it*; *And as for Preaching going down, and people becoming Heathens*; this I ſay, that Preaching which is grounded upon covetouſneſs, *let it go down, let their Preaching go down*; for they rather keep people in heatheniſme, then bring any to the true *knowledge of God*, who themſelves dare not truſt *God* for their *maintenance*; after which things the Gentiles ſeek.

Object. *But though thoſe learned men have been Covetous and proud, and made an evil uſe of their maintenance, nevertheleſs is it not convenient, that the Law remain which compelleth men to pay to the Miniſters, for peradventure God may raiſe better men in their places, as gifted men, and ſuch like.*

Anſw. Let the Law of *Chriſt* remain, *let him that preacheth the Goſpel live of it*, but let not any law *remain* which *compelleth* men, contrary to their freedome, to *maintain* a *Miniſtry*, for while any ſuch Law doth *remain*, it drawerh covetous men to be *Miniſters*; is not the hope of a good *maintenance*, as it it is called 100*l*, or 200*l*, *Per annum*; that moveth the *Father* to ſet his *Son* to the *Univerſity* to be made a *Miniſter*? cannot many in *England* tell this by experience; and is not this *Covetouſneſs*, *the root of all evil*? and is not this maintenance that which cauſeth the *Jeſuits*, and *Papiſts*, deſire to be in this land again? hoping that the law, which their *Father the Pope* made will *maintain them*, which law if it were once made null, & void, their hopes would be fruſtrated; for if the people be once clearly freed from that yoake of bondage, they would not eaſily be brought under it again: *and as for theſe gifted men (ſo called)* hath it not been a ſnare unto them, and the love to the *money*, or *maintenance*, hath inticed them to receive (*orders*) the *Popes orders*? and have not many of them become as *Cruel* in proſecuting the *Popes law*, for a *forced maintenance*, as the learned. Well this I muſt ſay from the *Lord God*, unto you who ſay you

Was not the firſt Law for payment of Tithes ſince Chriſt came in the fleſh, made in the time of *Pope Innocent* the 3d. In the year 1215. and was not that in the time of Apoſtacy and night of darkneſs? and is not

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are *gifted men*; and have thus betrayed your *Teſtimony*; *Gods hand is ſtretched out againſt you above all other men*; *for as much as you have profeſſed to have the gift of his Spirit, and that freely, and now go to ſell it, and compell people to buy it*; *O wicked abomination*! Was not the time once that you cryed againſt *oppreſſion*, and are you become *oppreſſors*? are you ſo quickly *gone in the way of* Balaam *for gifts, and rewards, the wages of unrighteouſneſs*, and would have this burthen alwaies to remaine upon the people, *O greivous wickedneſs! the Lords anger is kindled againſt you, and it will be more tollerable in the day of judgement, for the* Pope *and his company (I mean the vniverſity men) than for you*; becauſe the Lord hath ſhewed more of his loving kindneſs unto you, than he hath done unto them, and yet you have not prized it.

; that a bad foundation for the Miniſters of the Goſpel to ſtand upon and an unconfortable Maintenance for them to live on?

And when I had dilligently *conſidered* upon theſe things, I ſaw it no way *dangerous* to *deſtroy the Goſpel of Chriſt*, To bear a *Teſtimony againſt Tythes*; or to bear a *Teſtimony* againſt any other *maintenance*, which may be *ſetled* upon *Miniſters* by a *Law*, which *compels* men to *maintain* a *Miniſter*, which they beleive is not a *Miniſter of Chriſt*; But rather to bear ſuch a *Teſtimony*, and to take away the *Law*, that *compels* men to *maintain* thoſe men, which they do not beleive are the *Miniſters of Chriſt*, is *dangerous to deſtroy the miniſtry of Antichriſt*, if the matter be *conſidered* well; for have they not from *one age* to *another*, from *time*, to *time*, throughout the *dark night of Apoſtacy*, made this (to wit) a *ſetled maintenance*, the *foundation* of their *Miniſtry*? and where there was no *ſetled Maintenance*, *no Miniſter, no Preaching*: may not *England* experience this? But the *Miniſters* of *Chriſt*, that are ſo *in deed & truth*, will be contented with what *Chriſt* hath *alloted to them*: *for a neceſſity is laid upon them, and they muſt preach the Goſpel, or elſe woe unto them: and he that preaches the Goſpel, let him live of it*; and let every Church (ſo called) *maintain*, their own *Miniſter*, or *Miniſters*, ſo long as they *think* or *beleive him*, or *them* to be *Miniſters* of *Chriſt*; but if any man in the ſaid *Church*, or *Aſſembly*, be not willing, let him not be *compelled* any otherwiſe than by *love*; *Let people do as they would be done unto*, and ſhew themſelves to be *Chriſtians indeed*; throughout all *Chriſtendome*, Let their be no *compelling* of men

Do not they make a ſetled Maintenance the foundation of their Miniſtry and Goſpel? & isnot the greateſt ſtriving by them about the greateſt Benifices? and the moſt preaching where their is the greateſt gifts?

to *beleive*, seeing *Faith is the gift of God*; *and let every man be fully perswaded in his own mind*, *for whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin*; and let there be good *Laws* to punish *Wickedness*, *as murder*, *stealling*, *whoredome*, *drunkenness*, *cozening*, *false witness*, or any other thing which deserveth *punishment* by the *Law of God*, and let it be done without *partiallity or respect of persons*, or of the *Religion* they *professe*, and let not Gods *Spirit* be stoped by a Law, in neither *male*, nor *female*, but let that have freedome in all, for *Gods* righteous *Judgments* will fall upon them, that seek to hinder or stop that; and therefore let there be liberty for one *Society* of people to *dispute* or *discourse* with another (though *different* in their *judgments*,) concerning *the things of God*; *provided*, there be no *violence* used by one party to another, with their *hands*, or with *weapons*, or with any other thing, that may do hurt to the *body*, or *life* of *man* or *woman*, *old* or *young*, and let there be moderation; and if any pretend to be led by the *Spirit of God*, and yet do *wickedly*, let them be *punished*, as their transgession doth deserve; but let not that be called *wickedness*, which is not so indeed, but let every thing be weighed in the *Ballance of Equity*, that *judgment* and *Justice* may be set up, and *righteousness*, and *peace may run down*, that violence be no more heard in the Land.

1 Tim. 1, 8, 9. ver.

For the day of *Gods* everlasting love is come, and he is visiting the people in his tender mercy, *in causing his light to spring from on high*, *and his day to dawn*, and he is *discovering the skirts of the Whore*, *and the hour of her judgment is come*; and all that do, or seek to uphold her, *a day of woe*, *and desolation* is coming upon them, *a day of Sorrow and misery*; and therefore all people be advised, to prize the loving kindness of the *Lord*, who by his *light* doth, and will let you see your *states* and *conditions*, and the *intents* of your *hearts* are known to the *Lord*; Is it not he that *searcheth the heart*, *and tryeth the reines*, and declareth unto man what is his thoughts? *Is not this Testimoony true*, *that Light is come unto you*? and if it be come to you, why will ye not walk in it? what can you expect if you prize not this loving kindness of *God in Christ*? *who comes a light unto you*, and letteth you see how it standeth between *God*, *and your own souls*.

Luke 1. 78.

Amos 4. 13.

And therefore all people *consider* of your *wayes* and your *doings*,

ings, and while you have a *time* and a *day* of *visitation* from the Lord, *prize it*, and weigh things in the *Ballance of equity*, and see whether these things be not so: consider, if the *pretended Ministers* of the *Gospel* in *England* have not been *Antichristian?* what was the *Bishops* who received their *Ordination* from the *Pope*, or at the least did derive their *succession* from him? *If the root be unholy, what can the branches be? If the Pope be Antichristian, what were the Bishops? And if the Bishops were Antichristian, what can the pretended Presbytery be?* do not they derive their *succession* from the *Bishops*? would not they be *heirs* of their *Inheritance*? would not they rule over the *Conscience*? what is the meaning of all this *covetousness and pride* amongst them? whats the meaning of this *envy* and *stirring* up *the Magistrates* to cast men into prison, and spoile their goods? what do they think this is the way to *convert* people unto *God?* or *convince* people that they are *Ministers* of *Christ? surely* nay, people may rather by all these things, judge that they are *Antichristian Ministers*; and so this doth but discover their folly and madness unto all men, who have understanding; But what is the matter *they cry up the Gospel so much?* do they that *out of the integrity of their hearts?* or is it not rather *out of the deceit of their hearts?* is it not because of their *hire*? would not those which are called *Independants* turn to the name of *Presbyters*, rather *than deny their wages?* and the *Presbyters* turn to *Episcopacy*, *rather than deny theirs?* nay, would not the greatest part of all those men, if the *Magistrate* so *commanded*, and they have that liberty granted them, *turn to say, or sing mass*, and call that *Gospel*, and cry it up too, *rather than deny their hire*, *the Popes wages?* so that of all that may be said, or seen concerning them; *the love of money (which is the root of all evil) is the foundation upon which they stand*; and that is the main thing they cry up in effect; for say they, *take away the maintenance, and the Gospel will down*; and as one of them said, (being asked if he preached for hire) *This is the great quarrel of all, they have against us, to pull down the Ministry of the Word.* What is this but to make it the *Foundation?* yea, and the chief thing that doth uphold them: But the *Lord God* of *Heaven* and *Earth* is risen, who will not only *discover*, but also *shake* their *Foundation*, and *dread* and *terrour*, and *amazement* shall come

1 Tim 6. 10.

upon them from the *Lord God, who searcheth the heart, and tryeth the reins.*

Oh what a ſnare hath this *Setled* or rather *forced Maintenance* been! it hath not only *inticed* the *Independants* and *Preſbyterians*, but the *Baptiſts alſo* have been *partakers thereof*; it is even but a *remnant* that have eſcaped *drinking of this Cup of Abomination*; and theſe few are ſet even as a *mark for all the reſt to ſhoot their arrows of envy and malice againſt*: And when I conſidered, whether the People were clear and innocent as touching this matter; Alas nay, *the People love to have it ſo*; and therefore they cry for *Laws* to *compel* (themſelves) to pay to their *Miniſters*; and my heart pittied them that they ſhould be ſo *blind* and *ignorant*, and I ſaid, were it not better for them if they have a mind to *maintain* their own *Miniſters*, that they did it *freely*, and of their own *accord*? Alas, what fooliſh people be thoſe, who call for a *Chain* to be bound in, and a *Rod* to whip themſelves, that ſo him whom they call their *Miniſter* may *bind* them, and *whip* them, and *hail* them to *Courts* and to *Priſon*, and *ſpoil their Goods* when he pleaſeth; But alas the ground of all this is *Ignorance*, for the People have been kept from the *light, which ſhould give unto them the knowledge of the glory of God*; and who hath kept them from it but theſe Merchants of *Babylon*? have not they called it *natural*? have not they ſaid, *that that which reproveth* for ſin is a *natural Conſcience*? and the Scriptures doth ſay, *it is the Spirit of truth*; and ſo the People have been ſo fooliſh to give their *money* to be made *blind*, and to be led into the *ditch*, and ſo *periſh*; But when I conſidered, that thoſe *Prieſts* were in a great meaſure the cauſe of all theſe *Abominations*, and *Wickedneſs* (I mean thoſe that go in *Balaams way*) Then I began to admire the long-ſuffering and forbearance of God, who hath ſpared them thus long, and given them ſo many *warnings*, and *viſits* by his Servants, *that ſo they might return from their wickedneſs, and the evil of their doings, that he might have mercy upon them, and do them good*; but yet for all this, they will not return, but will do *deſpite* unto the *Spirit of grace*, and will cleave unto their *Idols*; it is not long ere the *Lord* will ſay, (as he once ſaid concerning a *People*) *My Spirit ſhall not alwayes ſtrive with man*; and then *Woe* and *deſolation* ſhall come upon them, & all that partake with them; Where-

2 Cor. 4. 6.

John 16, 7, 8.

Gen 6. 3.

fore

fore you *Rulers*, and all *People*, take heed that ye do not uphold them, after you see this their *abomination*, If you do ye shall not *prosper*, nor escape the *judgments of God*; and also take heed that you do not stop your *ears* against that which would let you understand and see their wickedness; for if you do stop your *ears*, *ignorance* shall not excuse you *in the day of the Lord God*.

Object. *But saith the People, our Ministers they Christen our Children, and doth not that make them Christians? and it is possible if we do not hire them, they will not Christen our Children, and will they not then be Heathens?*

Answ Then it seems your *Ministers* do that which the *Ministers* of *Jesus Christ* did not do (to wit) *Sprinkle Infants*, and call it *Christening* or *Baptisme*, an *Ordinance* of the *Popes* making, and for which all the great sums of Money is given to the *Pope* and his *Ministers*, that you may have the *name* of *Christians*, which *name* as it appears to me, is derived from *Sprinkling with Water*, which some People call *Christening*; and indeed it is possible if the *Popes* Wages be taken away, then they will cease to *Sprinkle* the *Children*; but however this is my *Testimony*, that they have no *right* in *equity* and *conscience* to demand, (much less to force) a *maintenance* from those that do not *hire them*, nor *approve* of their *Doctrine*, as their *Christening*, and such like things, which is not at all *necessary* to *Salvation*; but this is the thing that is *necessary* to *Salvation*, that *Children* be informed to the *Light*, *Gods Covenant*, *which is given for Salvation to the ends of the earth*, which if they walk in it; *they will come to know God, and Jesus Christ, which is life eternal*, (though they never be *Christened*) and if they be *Christened* and know not *him*, they are in the state of *Heathens*, *for the Heathen know not God*. *Isa.* 42. 6. & 49. 6.

Object. *But if every man may do as he will in those things, will not this bring all into confusion? do not we see that the granting the liberty of Conscience, hath brought much distraction in this Nation of* England? *and therefore we judge it best that all People be brought into a Conformity again, at the least let there be limits, and Laws, that no man may question our Ministers.*

Answ. Let every man be fully perswaded in his own mind, for whatsoever is not of faith is sin; and the unity is in the faith; and whatsoever is out of the *faith*, is in the *Confusion*; and it is not Read Rom. 14. *Ephes.* 4. 13.

not the *compelling* of men, that brings into *unity* and *fellowship*, but the *love of God* doth, whose *arm* and *power* is ſtretched over this *Nation*, through whoſe *love*, *Liberty of Conſcience* hath been *proclaimed*, which was long waited for; and this hath done no hurt to any but the *Whore*, and the *Merchants* of *Babylon*; and *diſtraction* and *deſolation* is coming upon her from the *Lord God, for ſtrong* is he that *judgeth her*. And ſo you that would have People brought into a *Conformity* again, and have *Laws* to *limit* the *holy one* again; this I ſay, you are ſuch as have *drunken of the Whores Cup of abomination, and muſt drink of the Cup of the indignation of God, poured out without mixture:* What have you forgotten ſince you your ſelves deſired Freedome, you that are called *Preſbyters?* would you not have been from under the yoak of *Epiſcopacy?* and would you deſire that your ſelves, which you are not willing to grant to others? O ye hypocrites! how can you *judge* and *ſpeak againſt* the *Whore of Rome*, and you your ſelves guilty of the ſame thing; who would rule over the *Conſciences*, and conform People to your *faith*, limit the *holy one*, that none may *ſpeak* or *queſtion* your *Miniſters*; what doth the *Whore* of *Rome* more? ſhe may laugh to ſee your folly and madneſs; what are you and your *Miniſters* afraid of? *that they may not be queſtioned:* what have they done, *that they are aſhamed of?* if they have done evil, *is it not juſt that they ſhould be confounded?* and if they have done well, *they need not be afraid*; *but fear ſurpriſeth the hypocrites*; *and the ſinners in Zion are afraid, for the anger of the Lord is kindled, and his jealouſie burns like fire, and the torment of the Whore is begun, and her* Merchants *have cryed, Alas, that great City*, &c. and both they that *help*, and they that are *holpen*, ſhall fall together; for the Lords *Decree* is ſealed againſt *Babylon* and her *Merchants*, and his purpoſe is to exalt his own *Name* in *righteouſneſs*, and break the *peace* of the *wicked*.

Read Rev. 18.

Rom 2.21, 22.

Pſal 78. 41,42.

Iſa.33.14.

Iſa. 31. 3.

Reſol. And having thus *viewed* and *compared* the *Miniſters* of *England*, (I mean the *Pariſh Teachers*) with the true *Miniſters* of *Chriſt*, in their *Call*, *Practiſe*, *Doctrine*, and *Maintenance*; and finding them clean contrary in all thoſe things *to the holy men of God*; Therefore in the *fear* and *dread*, and *preſence* of the *Lord God* of *Heaven* and *Earth*, I bear my *Teſtimony*, they be *Antichriſtian Miniſters*, & their *forced Maintenance is Antichriſtian*,

tichristian, for if it was such a great sin, in the *Sons* of *Eli* in the time of the *Law*, to *force Maintenance*, much more *now* in the time of the *Gospel*; And it is said concerning them, because of this thing, (to wit) because they said nay, *but thou shalt give it me now, and if not I will take it by force; wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord, for men abhorred the offering of the Lord*; and besides *Christ* is come, who is the *end* of that *Priest-hood*, who had a *Commandement* to receive *Tythes*, and the *Priest-hood* being *changed*, there is made of *necessity* also a *change* of the *Law*; and therefore this *forced Maintenance by Tythes* is not to be *upheld*, but *testified against* by the true *Christians*, *who worship God in the Spirit and in truth*; And to take away this *forced Maintenance*, is no way *dangerous* to *destroy* the *Preaching* of the *Gospel* of *Christ*, because he unto whom the *Gospel* of *God* is committed to *Preach*, must *Preach it, or else woe unto him*, (it is not then, I will *Preach* unto you, if you will give me such a *price* by the *Year*) for a *necessity* is laid upon him, and he must *Preach*, or give in his *Testimony*, whether *People* will *hear* or *forbear*, he must not then confer with *flesh* and *blood*, but as *Paul* said, (so the *Ministers* of *Christ* should do) *when it pleased God who seperated me from my mothers womb, and called me by his grace to reveale his Son in me, that I might Preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.*

1 Sam. 2. 16, 17.

Heb. 7. 12.

1 Cor. 9. 16.

Gal. 1. 15. 16.

And therefore all *People* upon the *Earth*, who understand and knows those *Parish Teachers* in *England*, are *Antichristian Ministers*, and their *Cristening*, and many such like things are of no *necessity* as to the *Salvation* of the *Soul*, but are *inventions* and *institutions* of the *Pope* in the *dark night of Apostacy*: *Come out from amongst them, and be you seperated, wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which doth not satisfie? Come buy wine and milk without money, and without price, hearken diligently that your Souls may live, eat that which is good, and let your Souls delight in fatness*; mind the *Testimony* of *Gods Spirit*, whether that be for you or against you, and weigh all things in the just *Ballance* wich *God* loveth, and slight not the day of your *visitation*, wherein *God* proffereth his love unto you, to draw you unto himself with his loving kindness, who is come to gather his *sheep*

2 Cor. 6. 17

Isa. 55. 1, 2, 3.

Prov. 11. 1. & 16. 11.

together

Ezek. 34. together with his *everlasting Arme*, and to *stretch* out his *hand* against those *Shepheards that have fed themselves and not the Sheep*; his *Indignation* is kindled against them, *because they have ruled over the Sheep of his Pasture with force and cruelty*; *therefore will he deliver his flock out of their hands, and they shall be a prey to them no longer, he himself will gather them together as a Shepheard doth his Sheep, and lead them into good Pastures, and feed them upon the Mountains of* Israel *by the rivers*; *and he will make all the places round about them a blessing, and they shall rejoyce in his goodness for evermore: Many shall run too and fro, and knowledge shall be encreased*, and it shall even be fulfilled that is writen, *the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the Earth, as the waters cover the Sea, and* Israel *shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting Salvation*: and then shall people say, *Salvation is not in the Hills or Mountains, but Salvation cometh from the Lord, and upon him will we wait; & then shall righteousness run down like a mighty stream, and judgment and justice be established in the Earth; and Christ shall raign as King, and in his dayes shall* Judah *be saved, and* Israel *shall dwell safely*: *and the name whereby he shall be called, is the Lord our righteousness, and he will destroy death for ever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the rebuke of his people will he take away out of all the earth; and in that day shall men say, loe this is our God, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoyce in his Salvation for evermore: and then the dry ground shall be as a poall, and the thirsty as springs of water; in the habitations of Dragons where each lay, shall be a place for reeds and rushes; and the redeemed of the Lord shall come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; and they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flie away: and then shall salvation, honour, and wisdome be ascribed, and given to the Lord our God, and to the Lamb, who alone is worthy, both now and for ever*, Amen.

Dan. 4. 12. Isa. 11. Hab. 3. 23. Jer. 25. 5, 6 Isa. 25. 8, 9 Isa. 35. 7, 8, 9, 10.

A Seri-

A Serious Meditation upon the dealings of God with England, *and the ſtate thereof in general.*

O *England*! thy day of *viſitation* from the *Lord*, hath been exceeding large, and his dealings with thee exceeding wonderful, when thou waſt in *diſtreſs* and cryed unto the *Lord*, he heard thee, and delivered thee from thy *oppreſſors*; but Oh how quickly haſt thou forgotten the loving kindneſs of the *Lord*, and the dealings of thy *God*! Remembor the dayes that are paſt when thou waſt in *bondage* and *ſlavery*, and deſired freedome to *worſhip* the *Lord*, and the *Lord* heard, and granted unto thee thy deſire, and alſo made known the way of his *worſhip* within thy *Gates*, in thy *Towns*, in thy *ſtreets* in thy *Aſſemblies* hath the *Lord* proclaimed the *way of life* and *Salvation*, by his *Children* and *Servants*; but oh how haſt thou requited the *Lord* for his loving kindneſs! how haſt thou intreated his *Servants* with *priſons*, *whipings*, and *revilings*! who bare their *teſtimony* againſt thy *wickedneſs*, againſt thy *pride* and *coveteouſneſs*, and *Idolatry*; but oh how haſt thou rejected the counſel of the *Lord*! and hath choſen thine *own wayes*, and followed thy *own counſel*, and hardned thy *heart*, and ſtiffned thy *neck*: even like a *rebellious people*, that would none of the *Law* of the *Lord*, and therefore thou muſt eat the fruit of thy own doings, *and confeſs that the Lord is juſt in all his wayes, and righteous in all his judgements*; for thou haſt ſinned againſt the *Lord*, in that thou haſt not performed thy *promiſes*, which thou made in the *day* of thy *diſtreſs*, and therefore *diſtreſs* muſt come upon thee *again*, to bring thee to remember thoſe things and *repent*, which if thou do the *Lord* will have *mercy* upon thee, and *heal* thy *back-ſlidings*, but if thou do not, but continue in thy *rebellion*, the *Lord* will continue his *judgments upon thee*; *ſhould not the long-ſuffering of the Lord lead thee to repentance, and his gentle dealings with thee by correction, cauſe thee to underſtand that he loves thee?* but if thou wilt not receive inſtruction, by all his *gentle dealings*, but wilt go on in thy *wickedneſs*, what canſt thou then expect, but the *indignation* of the *Lord* to fall upon thee? what doſt thou think if thou continue in perſecuting the *Servants* of the *Lord*, (to wit) thoſe that tell thee of thy *wickedneſs*, thy *pride* and *coveteouſneſs*; doſt thou think that that will turn the *judgments* of *God* from thee? ſurely nay, that will but haſten *woe* and *miſery* upon thy own

 head;

head; Oh what a day of *visitation* hast thou had! how many times hath the *Lord* delivered thee! and now it may be said by thee, as it was once concerning *Israel* of old; *yea they turned back and tempted God, and limited the holy one of Israel; they remembred not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy:* Is not this thy condition oh *England?* although indeed the *Lord* hath a *remnant* in thee, that do *not bow their knees to Baal, nor pour out drink-offerings to the Queen of heaven*; and this *remnant* are those which thou calls *troublers of thy peace*, which *trouble thee* much, like as *Elia troubled Israel*, and this *remnant* that *woman Jessabel*, (I *mean* thy *false Church that paints her self*) would have destroyed, that so her *false Prophets* which feeds at her *Table*, might not be troubled, but trouble must come upon them, and their *peace* must be broken; and although *Jessabel* cause a *Fast* to be *proclaimed*, yet God will execute his *judgment* in thee, and if thou say in thy heart, wherefore come these things upon me? for the greatness of thine *iniquities* are thy *skirts* discovered, and thy *heels* made *bare*, for the *Lord* hath seen thy *adulteries*, and thy *neighings*, the *lewdness* of thy *Whoredoms*, and thine *abominations*, on the *hills*, in the *fields*; Woe unto thee oh *England*, wilt thou not be made clean, when shall it once be?

Oh! what a large *profession* hath been made in thee; what a talk of *Godliness* and *Christianity*, but alas what is found in thee? doth not *pride* and *envy* abound in thee? and hath not these things greatly *displeased* the *Lord?* and for this cause is the *anger* of the *Lord kindled*, which will *devour* the *bryers* and *thorns* in one day, and in that day *whither will you flie?* and *where will you leave your glory?* you that have gloryed in *professing* the *Gospel* and *Ordinances*, and even made this a *covering* for your *wickedness* and *abomination*, who under a pretence of *seeking the glory of God*, have sought honour to your selves, and to make your *names* great in the earth; is it not even thus oh *England?* and hath not thy *Prophets that divine for money*, and thy *Priests that preach for hire*, have not they flattered thee in thy *iniquities?* have not they cryed, *Peace to thy Rulers*, even until the *finger of the Lord* hath broken forth against them, and they have been *confounded*; and wilt thou not for all this receive *instruction* nor *correction*, but still go on in thy *wickedness* and *rebellion* against the *Lord?* what wilt thou *revolt* more and more, and shew more and more *cruelty* to the *Servants of the Lord*; surely then more and more of the *indignation* of the *Lord* thou must feel: what

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is it now become a trouble to thee to have *sin* reproved in thy *gates*? Doſt thou make him an offender that ſpeakes the truth? And do thoſe men that *teſtifie* againſt thy *wickedneſs*, *break thy peace*, the peace of *thy Rulers and the peace of thy Prieſts*? And do *thy Prophets, that devine for money*, & *Prieſts that preach for hire*, do they tell thee, that it would be a *happineſs* to thee, if thou were ridd of thoſe men that reprove thee for thy *wickedneſs*? do not they even thus oh *England*? And do not many of thy *People* think and ſay the ſame? what would it be thy *happineſs* to ſin without reproof? ſurely, nay; *for if once they whoſe ſouls are vexed with thy filthy converſation, were driven out of thee*; then would *thy miſery come*, & the Lord would make thee *deſolate*, even like *Sodom*, & *Gomorrah*, which was overthrown, for an example of his *righteous judgments* unto all that would not receive *inſtruction*.

Oh how is thy *Silver* become *droſſe*! And thy *liberty* become *bondage*! Oh how art thou gone *backward*, and not *forward*? even doating upon thy old *Idolls*, and not content that they ſhould worſhip them that have ſet their minds thereupon; but thou wouldeſt alſo, *compel* that *remnant* in thee, *that are followers of the Lambe*, for whoſe ſake the *Lord* hath long *ſpared thee*, and yet thou art ſo *fooliſh*, and *unwiſe*, (as much as in thee lyeth) to haſten on thy own *diſtruction*; what may wickedneſs be *tollerated* in thee, and not be reproved? Is this the *liberty* that thou now ſeeks after? Wouldeſt thou have *wickedneſs* eſtabliſhed by a *Law*, and the *reprovers* thereof to be condemned? Is it not even thus within thy *borders*, *and yet for all this thou wilt lean upon the Lord, and ſay, is not he amongſt us, no evil can come unto us? and cry peace, peace, even till diſtruction come upon thee from the Lord*: Oh how often hath the *Lord* invited thee! and even with his *love* ſought to draw thee unto himſelf; *but thou haſt refuſed his loving invitation, and greived his holy Spirit from time to time*: ſo that if the *Lord ſay*, as *he once ſaid*, concerning *Ephraim*, it is but juſt; *England is joyned to Idols, let it alone*; and then deſolation and miſery will come upon it; when I would comfort my heart againſt ſorrow, it is even faint within me, to conſider what *warnings*, from time to time haſt thou had, and this thou haſt, and doſt account thy trouble; but greater trouble ſhall come upon thee from the *Lord*, except thou repent: Oh how haſt thou *choſen thy own waies* and followed *thy own Counſels*, and would have *Miniſters of thy own making*,

and

and *Prophets*, which would flatter thee in thy *wickedneſs*, and *Prophecy* ſmooth things unto thee, even the deceit of their own [illegible], and this thou haſt *loved* rather than plain and honeſt dealing, and now what ſhall the *Lord* do unto thee for thoſe things? ſhall not he *recompence* thee according to thy *wayes*, and *doings*? and in that day thou ſhall confeſſe to his *righteous judgments*. How have thy *Prieſts* ſtirred up thy *Rulers* againſt *a harmleſs people*! even like as *Amazia the Prieſt of Bethel did*, who complained againſt *Amos the Prophet*, ſaying, *Amos hath conſpired againſt the King*, the *Land is not* able *to bear his words*, is it not even thus among thy *Prieſts*, Oh *England*! and alas what have this *People* done againſt thee, I mean the *diſpiſed remnant* which are called *Quakers*, what evill have they done, that thou art ſo mightily troubled? what do thy *Prieſts* ſay concerning them, do they ſay they are *Heriticks*, and ſuch like? But *how*, *when* or *where* did they prove it againſt them, within thy *borders*? it is good for all thy *Inhabitants*, Oh *England*, to conſider of this matter, and not *imbrue* their *hands* in the *blood* of the *innocent*; for of a truth the *Lord* hath raiſed this *people* up within thy *borders*, to make thee a *happy* and a bleſſed *Nation*, for even in *him*, *in whom they have beleived*, *the Nations comes to be bleſſed*, even in *Jeſus Chriſt the Covenant*, *the light which is given for ſalvation to the ends of the earth*, of whom they have *born*, and do *bear* their *Teſtimony* within thy *borders*, of which *Teſtimony* they need never be *aſhamed*; which if thou ſhouldeſt alwaies *reject*, and go on in thy *Rebellion*, thou wilt be moſt *unhappy* and *miſerable*, even the worſt of the *Nations*: and therefore it is my *deſire* in the *bowels* of *love*, as being one of thy *Inhabitants*, who wiſheth thy *welfare*, and *happineſs*, that thou mayeſt ſeriouſly *meditate* upon the *dealings of God* with thee, and upon his *loving kindneſs* which hath been, and yet is *tendered* unto thee; and that thou mayeſt return to the *Lord*, is the earneſt deſire of my *ſoul*, leſt it be ſaid to thee, as Chriſt once ſaid to *Jeruſalem*; *O England*, *England*, *thou that killeſt the Prophets*, *and ſtoneſt them that are ſent unto thee*; *how often would I have gathered thy Children together*, *as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings*, *but you would not*? *Oh that thou hadſt known in this thy day*, *the things that belong to thy peace*, *but now they are hid from thine eyes*.

The End.

THE MINISTERS OF ENGLAND

Which are called, the

Ministers of the Gospel,

V Veighed in the Ballance of Equity:

By way of Consideration, whereby it plainly appears, whether they be the Ministers of Christ, or of Antichrist.

And also, Whether to bear a Testimony against a settled Maintenance, either by Tyths or any other way which may be invented to uphold that Ministry, be any way dangerous to destroy the Gospel of Christ; *Resolv...*

With a Serious Meditation upon the dealings of God with *England*, and the State thereof in general.

Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them: for the wayes of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them, but transgressors shall fall therein, Hos. 14. 9.

Published for the satisfaction of such as desire to prove all things, and are willing to hold that fast which is good; By a Friend unto the faithful Ministers of the Gospel of Christ, *John Brayshaw*.

LONDON, Printed for *Robert Wilson*, at the Sign of the *Black-spread Eagle* and *Wind-Mill*, in *Martins le Grand*. 1652.

BIBLIOTHECA·BODLEIANA·

THE MINISTERS OF ENGLAND

VVhich are called *Ministers* of the *Gospel*, weighed in the ballance of Equity.

Hen I began to consider of these things, and weighed them in the ballance of Equity and Truth; my soul within me was troubled, to hear the cry amongst the People concerning the *Ministers*, and the *Gospel*; some crying this is a *Minister* of the *Gospel*, another that; and while I was meditating on these things, the Lord God, that made Heaven and Earth, by his Spirit said unto me, Weigh them in my ballance of Equity, compare them with my Servants and *Ministers* in former ages, and see whether they be in their *Call*, *Practise*, and *Doctrine*, agreeable to my Servants; which if they be not, let the People understand and know thereof, that so many as desires after the way of life, and salvation, may be deceived no longer, and the rest may be left without excuse.

Then I began to consider how the Ministers and Servants of the Lord, were sent forth in former ages, whether they were sent to the *Schools* to learn, that they might be fitted to do the Lords work, or be his *Ministers*; and I could not find in all the *Amos* 7. 14. 15. vers.

Schools of *Learning*, [illegible] to be made *Mi-*
1.16 *nisters* of the *Gospel*, but they were called forth from their labours and imployments, and were endued with power from on high, by him that sent them, to perform the service they went about.

But they who are commonly called the *Ministers* of the *Gospel* in *England*, are sent to the *Schools* to learn the *Tongues*, and *Languages*, and that they say fits them to be *Ministers* of *Christ*;
1.7. which many *Tongues* and *Languages* came in since transgression, and the justice of God was executed upon them, who thought to make themselves a Name, and build a Tower whose top might reach unto heaven; and now those men called *Ministers*, glory in their *Tongues* and *Languages*. Do they not glory when they say he is an able *Minister*, he hath the *Tongues*? here the *Tongues* makes them able, (as they say) here they take the glory from
1.5.9. *Christ*, and ascribes it to the *Tongues*, which *Tongues Christ* redeems out of, and so they glory in that which *Christ* redeems out of, which glory the *Lord God* of Heaven and Earth will stain, and shame and confusion shall come upon them.

Object. *But sayes the People, they may be Ministers of Christ, though they learn the Tongues; was not* Paul *a Minister of Christ, and was not he brought up at the feet of* Gamaliel? *and had not the Apostles the gift of Tongues?*

Answ. Yea, *Paul* was a *Minister* of *Christ*, but the bringing
Acts 22.3. up at the feet of *Gamaliel*, did not make him a *Minister* of
the 22. *Christ* is apparent, for after that he persecuted the *Church of God*, until such time as the Lord met with him, and called him by his grace, to be a *Minister* and a *Witness* for his Name. Then if it be the Lords work, to call and make *Ministers*, then those men who believe or think, that *Tongues* or *Languages* can make *Ministers* of *Christ*, are in an error, and are ignorant of the *power* of *God*; and ascribe that to the *Tongues* and *Languages* (which at the best are but a gift) which is only due to God; though we do not forbid to speak with *Tongues*.

Object. *But then they say, you mistake us, we do not ascribe the glory to the Tongues, we use them but as a means.*

Ans. But if you use that as a means, after such a manner as God never

[illegible] *nisters* of *Christ*, [illegible] ascribe that to the means which properly belongs to God; and so would limit the holy one of *Israel* to your means, and helps, your *tongues* and *languages*, that so none might be called *Ministers* of *Christ*, but such as you approve of, who at the least will give some honour to your *tongues* and *languages*; which makes the people idolize you, and wonder after you, but now you are weighed & found too light, your glory will the Lord God of Heaven and Earth lay in the dust, and he will call forth *Servants* and *Ministers* by his *Spirit*, as in former ages, whom he will e due with his power from on high, that will glorifie him for ever.

Which tongues the Beast had pow[illegible] over, Rev. 13.27.

But further, when I began to consider the life and practise of those men, whether it might not be agreeable to the life and practice of the *Ministers* of *Christ*; and when I had considered the life of the *Prophets* of the *Lord*, and *Ministers* of *Christ*, they were *holy* men, and *meek* men, *just* and *sober*, and were not to be called of men *Master*, nor have the chiefest *place* in the *Assemblies*, nor *stand praying* in the *Synagogues*; *for* the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* did so, which was against *Christ*, which *Christ* cryed woe against; and when I had diligently considered this matter, I found them (to wit) those pretended *Ministers* of the *Gospel*, in the steps and practise of the *false Prophets*, *preaching* for *hire*, and *divining* for *money*, and more unjust than ever I read that the *false Prophets* were in former ages, in hailing men to prison, and spoiling their goods, and in the steps of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* which is afore mentioned; and when I saw them so clean contrary in their *call*, *life*, and *practise*, to the holy men of *God*, my heart began to pitty the people, whereupon it came presently into my mind. But nevertheless though it be thus with them in *life* and *practise*, for all this may not their Doctrine be good? and then I began to consider their *Doctrine* and compare some few of them with the *Doctrine of Christ* and his *Apostles*; *Christ* said, *be ye perfect as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect*; and the *Apostle* said, *we preach wisdom among them that are perfect*; mark that, (are perfect) was not that in this life? but do not these learned men say that none can be perfect in this life? the *Apostle* said, *the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death*

Tit. 1.7.8. Mat. 10. Mark. 12. 38. 39. 40.

Mich. 3.1.

Mat. 5.[illegible]

Cor. 2.6.

[illegible] 8.[illegible]

the Apostle was in the body? but o[illegible]y, none can be
made free from sin in this life? Joh[illegible] *that was the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the World*, was not Christ that true light? who said, *I am come a light into the World, that whosoever followeth me should not abide in darkness, but should have the light of life*; but do not they say that every man is not lighted, except it be with a *natural* & a *created light*; the *Apostle* said, *the grace of God that brings salvation hath appeared to all men*; but is not their Doctrine, that it hath appeared but to some men?

And when I began to weigh these *Doctrines* of theirs, in the *equal ballance*, I found them very unsound and contrary to the *Scriptures*, and then came into my mind that saying of *Christ*, *By their fruits ye shall know them, or, every tree is known by its fruits; men do not gather grapes of thornes, nor figgs of thistles*; and when I had thus considered the state of the *tollerated Ministers*, or *pretended Ministers of the Gospel in England*, and found them clear contrary to *Christ* & his *Apostles*, in these and many more things which I might mention, then I saw it was the Lords righteous judgments upon them to strip them naked and bare, and stain their glory; for as much as they have sought honour to themselves, and have dishonoured the Lord God of Heaven and Earth, who is now risen in his power, which they have denyed, and in effect they have said, his arme is shortned that it cannot save (as in former ages) and revelations is ceased, and is to be expected no more, and so the day hath been dark over them, and there hath been no vision, *and where there is no vision the people perish*: and for this cause will the Lord God let them know the revelation of his righteous judgments, which shall shortly come upon them, though they would put it far away, and though *they cry peace, peace, yet shall sudden destruction come*, both upon them, & all that willingly doe uphold them.

And then I began to consider upon the *setled* or rather *forced maintenance*, which as it appears doth uphold them, whether to bear a *testimony* against it, be any way dangerous to destroy the *Gospel of Christ* yea or nay? and when I had considered well upon this matter, I could not see nor find, that *Christ* had laid a settled, or forced *maintenance* for the foundation of the *Gospel*;

but

but did send for [illegible] freely, [illegible] freely they were to give, and he that preacheth the Gospel must live of the Gospel; here the Gospel was to maintain them, and not a forced maintainance to maintain it; for the Gospel is the power of God to Salvation, saith the Apostle, whose care was 1 Cor. 1. 18. not to make the Gospel chargeable, but as it doth appear those men which are called Ministers of the Gospel now in England, strive to make that which they call Gospel chargeable, and that not only to them, who receive their doctrine, but also to them who deny it; which is a most unrighteous thing, what can be more unrighteous than that one Congregation, or Assembly of people, should be forced by a law to maintain the Minister and meeting place of another Church, or Assembly, which are clean contrary the one to the other in their judgement, in things appertaining to the worship of God? and if it may be unrighteousness in the one, is it not so in the other? Seeing they both believe, or at least they say, the way which they walk in, is the way of God.

Object. But if it could be certainly judged which of them is in the right way, might not they that are in the right way, compel and force them that are not, to maintain them?

Answ. Nay, he that is in the right way, must do as he would be done unto, and that is just and right, and that is the royall law, James 2. 8. the Law of Christ; now if thou wouldest not willingly maintain the Minister of an assembly that differeth from thee in judgment, then thou must not desire, much less force a maintenance from them; but if thou keep a flock, eat the milk of the flock, if 1 Cor. 9. 7. thou plant a Vinyard, eat the fruit thereof; mark, he that plants a vinyard, may eat of the fruit thereof; he doth not say, thou may eat of that thou hast not planted; for how could that convince men, or convert them unto God. To eat them, and to devour them, would rather set mens hearts against them, and that way which thou dost professe: and therefore as in this respect to bear a Testimony against Tythes, or any other forced maintenance, to maintain Ministers, is no way dangerous to destroy the Gospel of Christ.

Object. But if there be not a law to compel men to maintain Ministers, People are so hard hearted and Covetous, they will not pay toward their maintenance; and then preaching will go down, and people will become heathen.

Answ.

Answ. It seems then, that for all the *Preaching* that hath been in *England*, people are yet *hard hearted*, and *Covetous*; what reason is there then, that those that are yet hard hearted, & covetous, should pay or maintain those men, that they have not profited by; when I consider this thing, it appeareth to me, to be greater *covetousness* in those men called *Ministers*, to desire to have a *maintenance* from those people, that have *not profited by them*; than it is for the other *to detain it*; *And as for Preaching going down, and people becoming Heathens*; this I say, that Preaching which is grounded upon covetousness, *let it go down, let their Preaching go down*, for they rather keep people in heathenisme, then bring any to the true *knowledge of God*, who themselves dare not trust *God* for their *maintenance*; after which things the Gentiles seek.

Object. *But though those learned men have been Covetous and proud, and made an evil use of their maintenance, nevertheless is it not convenient, that the law remain which compelleth men to pay to the Ministers, for peradventure God may raise better men in their places, as gifted men, and such like.*

Answ. Let the Law of *Christ* remain, *let him that preacheth the Gospel live of it*, but let not any law *remain* which *compelleth* men, contrary to their freedome, to *maintain* a *Ministry*, for while any such Law doth *remain*, it drawerh covetous men to be *Ministers*; is not the hope of a good *maintenance*, as it is called 100*l*, or 200*l*, *Per annum*, that moveth the *Father* to set his *Son* to the *University* to be made a *Minister*? cannot many in *England* tell this by experience; and is not this *Covetousness*, *the root of all evil*? and is not this maintenance that which causeth the *Jesuits*, and *Papists*, desire to be in this land again? hoping that the law, which their *Father the Pope* made will *maintain them*, which law if it were once made null, & void, their hopes would be frustrated, for if the people be once clearly freed from that yoake of bondage, they would not easily be brought under it again: *and as for these gifted men (so called)* hath it not been a snare unto them, and the love to the *money*, or *maintenance*, hath inticed them to receive (*orders*) the *Popes orders*? and have not many of them become as *Cruel* in prosecuting the *Popes law*, for a *forced maintenance*, as the learned. Well thus I must say from the *Lord God*, unto you who say you are

are *gifted men*; and have thus betrayed your *Testimony*; *Gods hand is stretched out against you above all other men*; *for as much as you have professed to have the gift of his Spirit, and that freely, and now go to sell it, and compell people to buy it, O wicked abomination!* Was not the time once that you cryed against *oppression*, and are you become *oppressors*? are you so quickly *gone in the way of* Balaam *for gifts, and rewards, the wages of unrighteousness*, and would have this burthen alwaies to remaine upon the people, *O greivous wickedness! the Lords anger is kindled against you, and it will be more tollerable in the day of judgement, for the* Pope *and his company (I mean the university men) than for you*; because the Lord hath shewed more of his loving kindness unto you, than he hath done unto them, and yet you have not prized it.

that a bad foundation for the Ministers of the Gospel to stand upon and an uncomfortable Maintenance for them to live on?

And when I had dilligently *considered* upon these things, I saw it no way *dangerous* to *destroy the Gospel of Christ*, To bear a *Testimony against Tythes*; or to bear a *Testimony* against any other *maintenance*, which may be *setled* upon *Ministers* by a *Law*, which *compels* men to *maintain* a *Minister*, which they beleive is not a *Minister of Christ*; But rather to bear such a *Testimony*, and to take away the *Law*, that *compels* men to *maintain* those men, which they do not beleive are the *Ministers of Christ*, is *dangerous to destroy the ministry of Antichrist*, if the matter be *considered* well; for have they not from *one age* to *another*, from *time*, to *time*, throughout the *dark night of Apostacy*, made this (to wit) a *setled maintenance*, the *foundation* of their *Ministry*? and where there was no *setled Maintenance*, *no Minister*, *no Preaching*: may not *England* experience this? But the *Ministers* of *Christ*, that are so *in deed* & *truth*, will be contented with what *Christ* hath *alloted to them*: *for a necessity is laid upon them, and they must preach the Gospel, or else woe unto them: and he that preaches the Gospel, let him live of it*; and let every Church (so called) *maintain*, their own *Minister*, or *Ministers*, so long as they *think* or *beleive him*, or *them* to be *Ministers* of *Christ*; but if any man in the said *Church*, or *Assembly*, be not willing, let him not be *compelled* any otherwise than by *love*; *Let people do as they would be done unto*, and shew themselves to be *Christians indeed* throughout all *Christendome*, Let their be no *compelling* of men

Do not they make a setled Maintenance the foundation of their Ministry and Gospel? & is not the greatest striving by them about the greatest Benifices and the most preaching where their is the greatest [illegible]

to believe, seeing Faith is the Gift of God, and let every man be fully perswaded in his own mind, for whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin; and let there be good Laws to punish Wickedness, as murder, stealing, whoredome, drunkenness, cozening, false witness, or any other thing which deserveth punishment by the Law of God, and let it be done without partiallity or respect of persons, or of the Religion they professe, and let not Gods Spirit be stoped by a Law, in neither male, nor female, but let that have freedome in all, for Gods righteous Judgments will fall upon them, that seek to hinder or stop that; and therefore let there be liberty for one Society of people to dispute or discourse with another (though different in their judgments,) concerning the things of God; provided, there be no violence used by one party to another, with their hands, or with weapons, or with any other thing, that may do hurt to the body, or life of man or woman, old or young, and let there be moderation; and if any pretend to be led by the Spirit of God, and yet do wickedly, let them be punished, as their transgession doth deserve; but let not that be called wickedness, which is not so indeed, but let every thing be weighed in the Ballance of Equity, that judgment and Justice may be set up, and righteousness, and peace may run down, that violence be no more heard in the Land.

1 Tim 1, 9, 10.

For the day of Gods everlasting love is come, and he is visiting the people in his tender mercy, in causing his light to spring from on high, and his day to dawn, and he is discovering the skirts of the Whore, and the hour of her judgment is come; and all that do, or seek to uphold her, a day of woe, and desolation is coming upon them, a day of Sorrow and misery; and therefore all people be advised, to prize the loving kindness of the Lord, who by his light doth, and will let you see your states and conditions, and the intents of your hearts are known to the Lord; Is it not he that searcheth the heart, and tryeth the reines, and declareth unto man what is his thoughts? Is not this Testimony true, that Light is come unto you? and if it be come to you, why will ye not walk in it? what can you expect if you prize not this loving kindness of God in Christ? who comes a light unto you, and letteth you see how it standeth between God, and your own souls.

Luke 1. 78.

Amos 4. 13.

And therefore all people consider of your ways and your doings,

ings, and while you have a *time* and a *day* of *visitation* from the Lord, *prize it*, and weigh things in the *Ballance of equity*, and see whether these things be not so: consider, if the *pretended Ministers* of the *Gospel* in *England* have not been *Antichristian*? what was the *Bishops* who received their *Ordination* from the *Pope*, or at the least did derive their *succession* from him? *If the root be unholy, what can the branches be? If the Pope be Antichristian, what were the Bishops? And if the Bishops were Antichristian, what can the pretended Presbytery be?* do not they derive their *succession* from the *Bishops*? would not they be *heirs* of their *Inheritance*? would not they rule over the *Conscience*? what is the meaning of all this *covetousness and pride* amongst them? whats the meaning of this *envy* and *stirring* up *the Magistrates* to cast men into prison, and spoile their goods? what do they think this is the way to *convert* people unto *God*? or *convince* people that they are *Ministers* of *Christ*? *surely*, nay, people may rather by all these things, judge that they are *Antichristian Ministers*; and so this doth but discover their folly and madness unto all men, who have understanding. But what is the matter *they cry up the Gospel so much*? do they that *out of the integrity of their hearts*? or is it not rather *out of the deceit of their hearts*? is it not because of their *hire*? would not those which are called *Independants* turn to the name of *Presbyters*, rather *than deny their wages*? and the *Presbyters* turn to *Episcopacy*, *rather than deny their's*? nay, would not the greatest part of all those men, if the *Magistrate* so *commanded*, and they have that liberty granted them, *turn to say, or sing mass*, and call that *Gospel*, and cry it up too, *rather than deny their hire, the Popes wages*? so that of all that may be said, or seen concerning them; *the love of money (which is the root of all evil) is the foundation upon which they stand*; and that is the main thing they cry up in effect; for say they, *take away the maintenance, and the Gospel will down*; and as one of them said, (being asked if he preached for hire) *This is the great quarrel of all, they have against us, to pull down the Ministry of the Word*. What is this but to make it the *Foundation*? yea, and the chief thing that doth uphold them? But the *Lord God of Heaven and Earth* is risen, who will not only *discover*, but also *take* their *Foundation*, and *dread* and *terrour*, And *amazement* shall come upon

1 Tim. 6. 10.

upon them from the *Lord God, who searcheth the heart, and tryeth the reins.*

Oh what a snare hath this *Setled* or rather *forced Maintenance* been! it hath not only *intrigued* the *Independants* and *Presbyterians*, but the *Baptists also* have been *partakers thereof*; it is even but a *remnant* that have escaped *drinking of this Cup of Abomination*; and these few are set even as a *mark for all the rest to shoot their arrows of envy and malice against*: And when I considered, whether the People were clear and innocent as touching this matter; Alas nay, *the People love to have it so*, and therefore they cry for *Laws* to *compel* (themselves) to pay to their *Ministers*; and my heart pitied them that they should be so *blind* and *ignorant*, and I said, were it not better for them if they have a mind to *maintain* their own *Ministers*, that they did it *freely*, and of their own *accord*? Alas, what foolish people be those, who call for a *Chain* to be bound in, and a *Rod* to whip themselves, that so him whom they call their *Minister* may *bind* them, and *whip* them, and *hail* them to *Courts* and to *Prison*, and *spoil their Goods* when he pleaseth; But alas the ground
2 Cor. 4. 6. of all this is *Ignorance*, for the People have been kept from the *light, which should give unto them the knowledge of the glory of God*; and who hath kept them from it but these Merchants of *Babylon*? have not they called it *natural*? have not they said, *that that which reproveth* for sin is a *natural Conscience*? and the Scriptures do thus say, *it is the Spirit of truth*; and so the People
John 16. 7, 8. have been so foolish to give their *money* to be made *blind*, and to be led into the *ditch*, and to *perish*; But when I considered, that those *Priests* were in a great measure the cause of all these *Abominations*, and *Wickedness* (I mean those that go in *Balaams way*) Then I began to admire the long-suffering and forbearance of God, who hath spared them thus long, and given them so many *warnings*, and *visits* by his Servants, *that so they might return from their wickedness, and he visit of their doings, that he might have mercy upon them, and do them good*; but yet for all this, they will not return, but will do *despite* unto the *Spirit of grace*, and will cleave unto their *Idols*; it is not long ere
Gen 6. 3. the *Lord* will say, (as he once said concerning a *People*) *My Spirit shall not always strive with man*; and then *Woe* and *desolation* shall come upon them, & all that partake with them; Where-

fore

fore you *Rulers*, and all *People*, take heed that ye do not uphold them, after you see this their *abomination*, for if ye do ye shall not *prosper*, nor escape the *judgments of God*, and allo take

that you do not stop your *ears* against that which would let you understand and see their wickedness, for if you do stop your *ears*, *ignorance* shall not excuse you *in the day of the Lord God*.

Object. *But saith the People, our Ministers they Christen our Children, and doth not that make them Christians? and is it possible if we do not hire them, they will not Christen our Children, and will they not then be Heathens?*

Answ. Then it seems your *Ministers* do that which the *Ministers* of *Jesus Christ* did not do (to wit) *Sprinkle Infants*, and call it *Christening* or *Baptisme*, an *Ordinance* of the *Popes* making, and for which all the great sums of Money is given to the *Pope* and his *Ministers*, that you may have the *name* of *Christians*, which *name* as it appears to me, is derived from *Sprinkling with Water*, which some People call *Christening*; and indeed it is possible if the *Popes* Wages be taken away, then they will cease to *Sprinkle* the *Children*; but however this is my *Testimony*, that they have no *right* in *equity* and *conscience* to demand, (much less to force) a *maintenance* from those that do not *hire them*, nor *approve* of their *Doctrine*, as their *Christening*, and such like things, which is not at all *necessary* to *Salvation*; but this is the thing that is *necessary* to *Salvation*, that *Children* be informed to the *Light*, *Gods Covenant*, *which is given for Salvation to the ends of the earth*, which if they walk in it, *they will come to know God, and Jesus Christ, which is life eternal*, (though they never be *Christened*) and if they be *Christened* and know not *him*, they are in the state of *Heathens*, *for the Heathen know not God*. Isa. 42. & 49.

Object. *But if every man may do as he will in those things, will not this bring all into confusion? do not we see that the granting the liberty of Conscience, hath brought much distraction in this Nation of* England? *and therefore we judge it best that all People be brought into a Conformity again, at the least let there be limits, and Laws, that no man may question our Ministers.*

Answ. Let every man be fully perswaded in his own mind, for whatsoever is not of faith is sin; and the unity is in the faith, and whatsoever is out of the faith, is in the Confusion; and let

not

not the *compelling* of men, that brings into *unity* and *fellowship*, but the *love of God* doth, whose *arm* and *power* is stretched over this *Nation*, through whose *love*, *Liberty of Conscience* hath been *proclaimed*, which was long waited for; and this hath done no hurt to any but the *Whore*, and the *Merchants* of *Babylon*;
ad Rev. and *distraction* and *desolation* is coming upon her from the *Lord God*, *for strong* is he that *judgeth her*. And so you that would have People brought into a *Conformity* again, and have *Laws* to *limit* the *holy one* again; this I say, you are such as have *drunken of the Whores Cup of abomination*, *and must drink of the Cup of the indignation of God*, *poured out without mixture*: What have you forgotten since you your selves desired Freedome, you that are called *Presbyters*? would you not have been from under the yoak of *Episcopacy*? and would you desire that your selves, which you are not willing to grant to others? O ye hypocrites!
m 2.21, how can you *judge* and *speak against* the *Whore of Rome*, and you your selves guilty of the same thing; who would rule over
al 78. the *Consciences*, and conform People to your *faith*, limit the
1.42. *holy one*, that none may *speak* or *question* your *Ministers*; what doth the *Whore* of *Rome* more? she may laugh to see your folly and madness; what are you and your *Ministers* afraid of? *that they may not be questioned*: what have they done, *that they are ashamed of*? if they have done evil, *is it not just that they should be confounded*? and if they have done well, *they need not be a-*
4.33.14. *fraid*; *but fear surpriseth the hypocrites*; *and the sinners in Zion are afraid*, *for the anger of the Lord is kindled*, *and his jealousie burns like fire*, *and the torment of the Whore is begun*, *and her* Merchants *have cryed*, *Alas*, *that great City*, &c. and both
a. 31. 3. they that *help*, and they that are *holpen*, shall fall together; for the Lords *Decree* is sealed against *Babylon* and her *Merchants*, and his purpose is to exalt his own *Name* in *righteousness*, and break the *peace* of the *wicked*.

esol. And having thus *viewed* and *compared* the *Ministers* of *England*, (I mean the *Parish Teachers*) with the true *Ministers* of *Christ*, in their *Call*, *Practise*, *Doctrine*, and *Maintenance*; and finding them clean contrary in all those things *to the holy men of God*; Therefore in the *fear* and *dread*, and *presence* of the *Lord God* of *Heaven* and *Earth*, I bear my *Testimony*, they be *Antichristian Ministers*, & their *forced Maintenance is Antichristian*,

the time of the *Law*, to *force Maintenance*, much more now in the time of the *Gospel*; And it is said concerning them, because of this thing, (to wit) because they said nay, *but thou shalt give it me now, and if not I will take it by force*; *wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord, for men abhorred the offering of the Lord*; and besides *Christ* is come, who is the *end* of that *Priest-hood*, who had a *Commandement* to receive *Tythes*, and the *Priest-hood* being *changed*, there is made of *necessity* also a *change* of the *Law*; and therefore this *forced Maintenance by Tythes* is not to be *upheld*, but *testified against* by the true *Christians*, *who worship God in the Spirit and in truth*; And to take away this *forced Maintenance*, is no way *dangerous* to *destroy* the *Preaching* of the *Gospel* of *Christ*, because he unto whom the *Gospel* of *God* is committed to *Preach*, must *Preach it*, *or else woe unto him*, (it is not then, I will *Preach* unto you if you will give me such a *price* by the *Year*) for a *necessity* is laid upon him, and he must *Preach*, or give in his *Testimony*, whether *People* will *hear* or *forbear*, he must not then confer with *flesh* and *blood*, but as *Paul* said, (so the *Ministers* of *Christ* should do) *when it pleased God who seperated me from my mothers womb, and called me by his grace to reveale his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.*

And therefore all *People* upon the *Earth*, who understand and knows those *Parish Teachers* in *England*, are *Antichristian Ministers*, and their *Christening*, and many such like things, are of no *necessity* as to the *Salvation* of the *Soul*, but are *inventions* and *institutions* of the *Pope* in the *dark night of Apostacy*: *Come out from amongst them, and be you seperated, wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which doth not satisfie? Come buy wine and milk without money, and without price, hearken diligently that your Souls may live, eat that which is good, and let your Souls delight in fatness*; mind the *Testimony* of *Gods Spirit*, whether that be for you or against you, and weigh all things in the just *Ballance* with *God* loveth, and slight not the day of your *visitation*, wherein *God* proffereth his love unto you, to draw you unto himself with his loving kindness, who is come to gather his *sheep* together

against those *Shepherds that have fed themselves and not the Sheep*, his *Indignation* is kindled against them, *because they have ruled over the Sheep of his Pasture with force and cruelty, therefore will he deliver his flock out of their hands, and they shall be a prey to them no longer, he himself will gather them together as a Shepheard doth his Sheep, and lead them into good Pastures, and feed them upon the Mountains of* Israel *by the rivers; and he will make all the places round about them a blessing, and they shall rejoyce in his goodness for evermore: Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be encreased*, and it shall even be fulfilled that is written, *the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the Earth, as the waters cover the Sea, and* Israel *shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting Salvation*: and then shall people say, *Salvation is not in the Hills or Mountains, but Salvation cometh from the Lord, and upon him will we wait; & then shall righteousness run down like a mighty stream, and judgment and justice be established in the Earth; and Christ shall raign as King, and in his dayes shall* Judah *be saved, and* Israel *shall dwell safely: and the name whereby he shall be called, is the Lord our righteousness, and he will destroy death for ever; and the Lord God will wipe away teares from all faces, and the rebuke of his people will he take away out of all the earth; and in that day shall men say, loe this is our God, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoyce in his Salvation for evermore: and then the dry ground shall be as a pool, and the thirsty as springs of water; in the habitations of Dragons where each lay, shall be a place for reeds and rushes; and the redeemed of the Lord shall come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; and they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flie away: and then shall salvation, honour, and wisdome be ascribed, and given to the Lord our God, and to the Lamb, who alone is worthy, both now and for ever*, Amen.

A Seri-

A Serious Meditation upon the dealings of God with England, *and the state thereof in general.*

O *England!* thy day of *visitation* from the *Lord*, hath been exceeding large, and his dealings with thee exceeding wonderful, when thou wast in *distress* and cryed unto the *Lord*, he heard thee, and delivered thee from thy *oppressors*; but Oh how quickly hast thou forgotten the loving kindness of the *Lord*, and the dealings of thy *God*! Remember the dayes that are past when thou wast in *bondage* and *slavery*, and desired freedome to *worship* the *Lord*, and the *Lord* heard, and granted unto thee thy desire, and also made known the way of his *worship* within thy *borders*, in thy *Towns*, in thy *streets* in thy *Assemblies* hath the *Lord* proclaimed the *way of life* and *salvation*, by his *Children* and *Servants*; but oh how hast thou requited the *Lord* for his loving kindness! how hast thou intreated his *Servants* with *prisons*, *whipings*, and *revilings*! who bare their *testimony* against thy *wickedness*, against thy *pride* and *covetousness*, and *Idolatry*, but oh how hast thou rejected the counsel of the *Lord*, and hath chosen thine *own wayes*, and followed thy *own counsel*, and hardned thy *heart*, and stiffned thy *neck*; even like a *rebellious people*, that would none of the *Law* of the *Lord*, and therefore thou must eat the fruit of thy own doings, *and confess that the Lord is just in all his wayes, and righteous in all his judgements*, for thou hast sinned against the *Lord*, in that thou hast not performed thy *promisses*, which thou made in the *day* of thy *distress*, and therefore *distress* must come upon thee *again*, to bring thee to remember those things and *repent*, which if thou do the *Lord* will have *mercy* upon thee, and *heal* thy *back-slidings*, but if thou do not, but continue in thy *rebellion*, the *Lord* will continue his *judgments upon thee*; *should not the long-suffering of the Lord lead thee to repentance, and his gentle dealings with thee by correction, cause thee to understand that he favours thee?* but if thou wilt not receive instruction, by all his *gentle dealings*, but wilt go on in thy *wickedness*, what canst thou then expect but the *indignation* of the *Lord* to fall upon thee? what dost thou think if thou continue in persecuting the *Servants* of the *Lord*, (I call) those that tell thee of thy *wickedness*, thy *pride* and *covetousness*, dost thou think that that will turn the *judgments of God* from thee? surely nay, that will but hasten *woe* and *misery* upon thy own head.

head; Oh what a day of *visitation* hast thou had! how many times hath the *Lord* delivered thee! and now it may be said by thee, as it was once concerning *Israel* of old; *yea they turned back and tempted God, and limited the holy one of Israel; they remembred not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy*: Is not this thy condition oh *England*? although indeed the *Lord* hath a *remnant* in thee, that do *not bow their knees to Baal, nor pour out drink offerings to the Queen of heaven*; and this *remnant* are those which thou calls *troublers of thy peace*, which *trouble thee* much, like as *Elias troubled Israel*, and this *remnant* that *woman Jessabel*, (I mean thy *false Church that paints her self*) would have destroyed, that so her *false Prophets* which feeds at her *Table*, might not be troubled, but trouble must come upon them, and their *peace* must be broken, and although *Jessabel* cause a *Fast* to be *proclaimed*, yet God will execute his *judgment* in thee, and if thou say in thy heart, wherefore come these things upon me? for the greatness of thine *iniquities* are thy *skirts* discovered, and thy *heels* made *bare*, for the *Lord* hath seen thy *adulteries*, and thy *neighings*, the *lewdness* of thy *Whoredoms*, and thine *abominations*, on the *hills*, in the *fields*. Woe unto thee oh *England*, wilt thou not be made clean, when shall it once be?

Oh! what a large *profession* hath been made in thee, what a talk of *Godliness* and *Christianity*, but alas what is found in thee? doth not *pride* and *envy* abound in thee? and hath not these things greatly *displeased* the *Lord*? and for this cause is the *anger* of the *Lord* kindled, which will *devour* the *briers* and *thorns* in one day, and in that day *whither will you flie*? and *where will you leave your glory*? you that have gloryed in *professing* the *Gospel* and *Ordinances*, and even made this a *covering* for your *wickedness* and *abomination*, who under a pretence of *seeking the glory of God*, have sought honour to your selves, and to make your *names* great in the earth, is it not even thus oh *England*? and hath not thy *Prophets that divine for money*, and thy *Priests that preach for hire*, have not they flattered thee in thy *iniquities*? have not they cryed, *Peace to thy Rulers*, even until the *finger of the Lord* hath broken forth against them, and they have been *confounded*; and wilt thou not for all this receive *instruction* nor *correction*, but still go on in thy *wickedness* and *rebellion* against the *Lord*? what wilt thou *revolt* more and more, and shew more and more *cruelty* to the *Servants of the Lord*; surely then more and more of the *indignation* of the *Lord* thou must feel: what

is it now become a trouble to thee to have *sin* reproved in thy *gates*? Dost thou make him an offender that speakes the truth? And do those men that *testifie* against thy *wickedness*, *break thy peace*, the peace of *thy Rulers and the peace of thy Priests*? And do *thy Prophets that devine for money*, & *Priests that preach for hire*, do they tell thee, that it would be a *happiness* to thee, if thou were ridd of those men that reprove thee for thy *wickedness*? do not they even thus on *England*? And do not many of thy *People* think and say the same? what would it be thy *happiness* to sin without reproof? surely, nay, *for if once they whose souls are vexed with thy filthy conversation, were taken out of thee*; then would *thy misery come*, & the Lord would make thee *desolate*, even like *Sodom*, & *Gomorrah*, which was overthrown, for an example of his *righteous judgments* unto all that would not receive *instruction*.

Oh how is thy *Silver* become *drosse*! And thy *liberty* become *bondage*! Oh how art thou gone *backward*, and not *forward*? even doating upon thy old *Idolls*, and not content that they should worship them that have set their minds thereupon, but thou wouldest also, *compel* that *remnant* in thee, *that are followers of the Lambe*, for whose sake the *Lord* hath long *spared thee*, and yet thou art so *foolish*, and *unwise*, (as much as in thee lyeth) to hasten on thy own *distruction*; what may wickedness be *tollerated* in thee, and not be reproved? Is this the *liberty* that thou now seekest after? Wouldest thou have *wickedness* established by a *Law*, and the *reprovers* thereof to be condemned? Is it not even thus within thy *borders*, *and yet for all this thou wilt lean upon the Lord, and say, is not he amongst us, no evil can come unto us*? *and cry peace, peace, even till distruction come upon thee from the Lord*: Oh how often hath the *Lord* invited thee! and even with his *love* sought to draw thee unto himself; *but thou hast refused his loving invitation, and greived his holy Spirit from time to time*: so that if the *Lord say*, as *he once said*, concerning *Ephraim*, it is but just; *England is joyned to Idols*, *let it alone*, and then desolation and misery will come upon it; when I would comfort my heart against sorrow, it is even faint within me, to consider what *warnings*, from time to time hast thou had, and this thou hast, and dost account thy trouble, but greater trouble shall come upon thee from the *Lord*, except thou repent: Oh how hast thou *choosen thy own wayes* and followed *thy own Counsels*, and would have *Ministers of thy own making*,

and *Prophets*, which would flatter thee in thy *wickedneſs*, and *Prophecy* ſmooth things unto thee, even the deceit of their own hearts, and this thou haſt *loved* rather than plain and honeſt dealing, and now what ſhall the *Lord* do unto thee for thoſe things? ſhall not he *recompence* thee according to thy *wayes*, and *doings*? and in that day thou ſhall confeſſe to his *righteous judgments*. How have *thy Prieſts* ſtirred up thy *Rulers* againſt *a harmleſs people*! even like as *Amazia the Prieſt of Bethel did*, who complained againſt *Amos the Prophet*, ſaying, *Amos hath conſpired againſt the King*, the *Land is not* able *to bear his words*; is it not even thus among thy *Prieſts*, Oh *England*! and alas what have this *People* done againſt thee, I mean the *diſpiſed remnant* which are called *Quakers*, what evill have they done, that thou art ſo mightily troubled? what do thy *Prieſts* ſay concerning them, do they ſay they are *Heriticks*, and ſuch like? But *how*, *when* or *where* did they prove it againſt them, within thy *borders*? it is good for all thy *Inhabitants*, Oh *England*, to conſider of this matter, and not *imbrue* their *hands* in the *blood* of the *innocent*; for of a truth the *Lord* hath raiſed this people up within thy *borders*, to make thee a *happy* and a bleſſed *Nation*, for even in *him*, *in whom they have beleived*, *the Nations comes to be bleſſed*, even in *Jeſus Chriſt the Covenant*, *the light which is given for ſalvation to the ends of the earth*, of whom they have *born*, and do *bear* their *Teſtimony* within thy *borders*, of which *Teſtimony* they need never be *aſhamed*; which if thou ſhouldeſt alwaies reject, and go on in thy *Rebellion*, thou wilt be moſt *unhappy* and *miſerable*, even the worſt of the *Nations*: and therefore it is my *deſire* in the *bowels* of *love*, as being one of thy *Inhabitants*, who wiſheth thy *welfare*, and *happineſs*, that thou mayeſt ſeriouſly *meditate* upon the *dealings of God* with thee, and upon his *loving kindneſs* which hath been, and yet is *tendered* unto thee; and that thou mayeſt return to the *Lord*, is the earneſt deſire of my *ſoul*. leſt it be ſaid to thee, as Chriſt once ſaid to *Jeruſalem*; O *England*, *England*, *thou that killeſt the Prophets*, *and ſtoneſt them that are ſent unto thee*; *how often would I have gathered thy Children together*, *as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings*, *but you would not*? *Oh that thou hadſt known in this thy day*, *the things that belong to thy peace*, *but now they are hid from thine eyes*.

The End.